# ASIA ANEW SECURITY FORUM

## ASIA DECLARATION

With the main theme of "New Technopolitics and Security Partnership", **Asia Anew Security Forum** was co- organized by TASAM National Defense and Security Institute as **a co-event of the 10th Istanbul Security Conference** held on **21-22 November 2024 at Wish More Hotel Istanbul.**

The Forum was attended by speakers and protocols from various countries, regions, fields and sectors. Diplomatic representatives and delegations from different countries also took part. The Forum featured speeches and presentations by local and foreign experts, academics and diplomats. Relevant authorities from Türkiye, Asia, Europe, the Americas and Africa were also represented at the Forum and all sessions were followed institutionally.

The Forum addressed the following topics that are vital for the present and future of the Turko-Asian Security Ecosystem; "Turko-Asian New Technopolitical and Security Ecosystem Biotechnology | Robotics | Artificial Intelligence | Nanotechnology | Space | Strategic Services", "Relations and Regional Strategies with RCEP, SCO, CICA, D8, ASEAN, EU, USA and New Partners Strategic Sectors", "Asia | Central Asia | East Asia | South Asia | South Asia| Southeast Asia"Resources System; Mutually Complementary Opportunities" and "Specific Sectors and Security Defense Industry | Land | Land | Sea | Air | Space | Police | Gendarmerie | Intelligence".

**It has been agreed that the following findings and recommendations put forward at the Forum will be brought to the attention of all relevant authorities and the public:**

1. Since 2004, **the Turkish Asian Center for Strategic Studies** (**TASAM**) has continuously voiced the motto "The 21st Century will be the '**Asian Century**', the '**Asian Era**'". With the Asia Anew Initiative, which is based on four main pillars such as "improving inter-state relations", "increasing the trade capacity of the private sector", "improving academic cooperation", "expanding interaction between societies", Asia, each country of which is attributed importance individually; "**Central Asia**" (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan), "**East Asia**" (China, South Korea, Japan, North Korea, Russia), "**South Asia**" (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) and "**Southeast Asia**" between the main continent and Oceania (Brunei, East Timor, Indonesia, Philippines, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam).

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2. **TASAM**, the think tank that first initiated holistic Asian studies in Türkiye, and its institutes in its network, have implemented numerous bilateral and multilateral international instruments with the vision it has put forward since 2004, very challenging at the beginning, in a climate that gradually became easier. Bilateral and trilateral mechanisms with all major countries, country and region-based strategic dialogue programs, economy-focused studies/projects, **International Turkic-Asian Congresses**, etc. specific forums, meetings, programs, projects, visits, reports, publications, academic studies have been managed as a complementary capacity building.

3. Türkiye has become an increasingly important actor in the international arena with its 84 million population, growing and developing economy, geostrategic position in the middle of the Afro-Eurasian main continent, historical, political and cultural ties with countries in Europe, the Black Sea, the Caucasus, Asia, the Middle East and Africa, increasing activity in the international arena, especially in the United Nations, and being one of the important members of organizations such as NATO, OSCE and CICA. In order to overcome threats and seize opportunities in the current international environment, Türkiye has adopted an "entrepreneurial and humanitarian" foreign policy concept, aiming to be strong both in the field and at the table with a diplomacy with high vision and mobility. With relatively solid foundations such as its strategic location, dynamic economy, strong institutions and human capital, Turkish foreign policy utilizes a wide range of complementary political, economic, cultural and humanitarian cooperation tools within the scope of its entrepreneurial and humanitarian approach, and strives to realize a vision of diplomacy that thinks globally and acts locally all over the world.

4. Türkiye's new initiative "**Asia Anew**", which aims to connect more strongly to Asia, a region with ancient ties and which has become the world's economic and center of gravity in the 21st century by hosting rising global powers, has been declared as a reflection of an entrepreneurial foreign policy concept that also requires innovation. Today, the international community is in serious competition for greater influence in Asia. Türkiye believes that it is in an extremely advantageous position due to its deep historical and cultural roots in this most dynamic region of the world.

5. **In the dimension of global competition, real and candidate integrations such as QUAD, AUKUS, BLUE DOT NETWORK, D10, T12, each with a different concept, aim to reorganize the Mediterranean-Atlantic and basically the Indo-Pacific. Making a strategic contribution to the Asia Anew Initiative by conducting comparative studies with China, Russia, BRI, SCO and other regional peripheral instruments is not an option but a necessity. Türkiye – Asia Mapping the "Institutional Capacity" and conducting a Needs Analysis are also essential for Building Interdependence and Proportional Risk in Relations to be successful.**

6. As one of the rising powers of Asia, China has become a rapidly growing power that the world is making great efforts to establish a partnership with, thanks to its area, population of nearly 1.4 billion, GDP of $17.79 trillion (2023), progress in industrialization and technology, growing and developing economy, natural resources, veto power in the United Nations, its place in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the strategies it has developed in foreign policy. The pandemic, which has profoundly affected world economies and transformed the international balance of power, has led China, which has long been seen as a "rival/rising power" against the "superpower" US, to become the new dominant actor in the international economic order. China is still at a positive level in economic growth rates at the end of 2020, when the world economies experienced major contractions after the pandemic.

7. As the economic balances of the global system are being rebalanced in the new order, Türkiye, taking advantage of its strategic advantage, is defining itself as a balancing, "security regulator" actor between Asia and Europe (EU). Thanks to its geographical location, Türkiye plays a critical role in trade between East and West and has been closely following China's Belt and Road initiative since 2013. Following Türkiye's significant efforts in the realization of the Trans-Caspian East-West Central Corridor, the first export train, which departed from Istanbul and crossed two continents, two seas and five countries - Georgia, Azerbaijan, the Caspian Sea and Kazakhstan - and arrived in Shian, China on December 19, 2020, is considered among the most important achievements of the Asia Anew initiative.

8. In developing its relations with Asian countries, Türkiye attaches special to the cooperation of China and the major countries. In this context, Türkiye attaches great importance to the SCO. Likewise, with the support of China and Russia and other member states, Türkiye was accepted as a "dialogue partner" of the organization at its 2012 summit in Beijing. In this way, Türkiye is improving its relations in many areas from international trade to security cooperation and intensifying its relations with international organizations such as ASEAN.

9. In the process of refocusing on Asia, Türkiye, as the westernmost Asian country, is envisaged to become closer to many countries from Central Asia to East Asia, South Asia to Southeast Asia, with which Türkiye has deep historical and cultural ties and thousands of years of relations. Strong interaction and civil diplomacy with Asia in the fields of economy and civil society will be possible.

It is also possible to cooperate with the transfer of knowledge and expertise in areas such as technology and industry 4.0, as well as to cooperate in development and infrastructure projects with countries at different stages of development on the continent. In particular, the instruments to be developed to improve the unsustainable and unsustainable trade deficit ratios in trade balances are of vital importance.

10. The rise of the Asian region in the international arena lends strength to the argument that the geopolitics of the 21st century will be shaped along the Asia-Pacific axis. The US-Russia struggle also shapes the conjunctural situation in the Pacific. Despite the military alliances formed by the US in this region, Russia has endeavored to form a new alliance by utilizing its historical relations dating back to the Soviet era. In this regional policy it is pursuing in partnership with China, it has come to the point of signing military pacts with countries such as North Korea and Vietnam. These alliances and polarization reveal new power struggles and the search for security.

11. States that hold power in the international system try to influence the global system by forming short-term alliances in order to protect their interests in the struggle for leadership in the global system. In times when global systems are fragile, even small moves can lead to very large and effective results. For this reason, sometimes small regional alliances can have major global consequences. The ICCPR, which was realized as a regional alliance between the US, the UK and Austria, is one of the alliances of this nature.

12. Security used to be seen as the sovereign power protecting the territory, preventing foreign intervention and ensuring stability in the region. Today, however, this understanding has changed. In this process, ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) has developed its own understanding of security. With the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, ASEAN abandoned its understanding of security built on a military perspective and approached it from a broader perspective, including economic, social and environmental factors. In the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, ASEAN put forward a comprehensive rallying strategy.

13. Türkiye reinforced its ties with the continent by assuming the Chairmanship-in-Office of the Asian Cooperation Dialogue for the 2019-2020 period. The Asia Anew initiative aims to consolidate Türkiye's position as a connector between Asia and Europe and contribute to its sustainable development.

14. In today's world, the rapid acceleration of technological development and the spread of globalization to a wider geography bring about social change and transformation. Many regional powers perceive this attitude as a threat and put into practice their neo-nationalist, protectionist, technopolitical reflexes, and against this understanding of life, neo- adopts a nationalist attitude. Türkiye's investments or developments under the domestic and national framework have been developed within this framework.

15. Developing trade systems and supporting them with new technologies is a critical point for a welfare society. In this regard, it is important to ensure that economic inequalities, one of the main problems of the Neo-Medieval Age, do not prevail in society. Hybrid systems including land, sea and digital trade routes should be established and global logistics networks should be developed in a fair manner.

16. Today's problems such as weakness of authority, economic inequalities, epidemics, natural disasters remind us of medieval conditions. The fact that these medieval conditions are also seen in today's modern world raises the concern of "are we living in a new neo-medieval period". It is necessary to take some measures to prevent our modern age from turning into neo-medieval conditions. Asia and its pioneers face a great challenge in this context. One of the most prominent elements in this regard is public governance. With governance based on justice, equality and fundamental human rights, it will be possible to ensure uninterrupted trade, sustainable development and social peace. For these reasons, increasing the functionality of regional structures such as the Organization of Turkic States is essential for international governance.

17. In each period, Türkiye has determined various foreign policies and established relations with various geographies within the framework of its own atmosphere and conditions. After the 2000s, it has put forward a more neoliberal and broader vision of diplomacy that encompasses different geographies. The "Asia Anew Initiative" has been directed towards Asia in a broader and more comprehensive manner. Thus, aiming to further strengthen its potential in Asia, Türkiye has defined a multifaceted strategy. However, problems such as power rivalry, cultural and political differences in this vast geography constitute important obstacles to Türkiye's vision.

18. The ideological vacuum created after the collapse of the USSR, particularly in Asia, is filled by Russia through the politicization of conservative values. This attitude of Russia aims to ensure stability in its domestic affairs while at the same time seeking to become a new power center in foreign relations.

19. It is seen that the EU is trying to protect itself and its interests by siding with the US in this shaken balance. The disputes between these great powers and their divergence are of great concern to the medium-sized states, especially those in Central Asia. Central Asian countries are trying to rebuild their security policies amidst states that are trying to increase their power while at the same time trying to preserve the fragile international order.

20. The Turkic states in Central are building a unity among themselves on the basis of cognate solidarity and trust. Due to both historical and conjunctural reasons, they form one side of the international poles by strengthening their ties with each other on the axis of polarization. They strive to build an alternative path through diplomatic efforts.

21. Critical minerals found in certain regions of the world, especially in China, are used as basic components in highly strategic areas such as energy and technology. These minerals, which constitute the basic building blocks of these critical sectors, have both an economic and political nature. The geographies where these minerals are located naturally attract the attention of powerful actors.

22. Due to their geopolitical position, the countries of the Turkic World, which are located in the regions where these valuable minerals are located, need to be cautious against potential threats. At the same time, they need to provide added value by processing and technologically developing these valuable minerals. As a result of these requirements, a security partnership should be established under the umbrella of the Organization of Turkic States. In addition, it is important to strengthen regional cooperation and solidarity. For this reason, a common strategy should be determined.

23. The Turkic states have played an important role in reshaping the concept of regional security. Especially in 1993, the concept of security was redefined. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, relations between the Turkic states and Türkiye began to improve, and activities were carried out in various branches on the basis of fraternal ties.

24. Since its establishment, the Organization of Turkic States aims to strengthen the unity and solidarity within the Turkic World and to increase cultural and political cooperation. As a result of these efforts, the Organization of Turkic States has focused on creating a common identity and strengthening this identity. In addition, one of the important points is to ensure cooperation in the field of security. The Organization of Turkic States aims to take actions that will contribute to regional security and security of security.

25. The international system, which was built under the umbrella of the UN after the two wars, has begun to lose its essence as the powerful have taken decisions in line with their own interests. The attitude in the Russia-Ukraine war and the inconsistent approaches in the Middle East have demonstrated how the powerful can apply double standards in line with their own interests. The international system has been neutralized by the very founders and defenders of the values of international law and democracy. For this reason, security is once again being assessed on the basis of military power.

26. The Eastern Mediterranean, which is an important part of Asia, is a geography of strategic importance due to its location. This strategic geography, which is located at the intersection of three continents, as well as the old and new worlds, is a historical, ancient geography where Western colonialist states have been struggling for power since the 19th century, as well as the struggle of ancient civilizations. Since history, important trade routes have passed through the ports of the Eastern Mediterranean and it has become the connection point between Europe and the East. All the states that have dominated this geography so far have developed economically and significant contributions to world civilization. For these reasons, the Eastern Mediterranean has always been a center of attraction and has become the target geography of powerful states.

27. In today's world, Israel and the problems in the Middle East, the presence of the navies of the states holding the power in this geography should not be evaluated independently of the fact that the Eastern Mediterranean and Cyprus are this strategic center of attraction. In the third world war, one of the biggest fronts of the war will be the Eastern Mediterranean.

28. In terms of security threat and cooperation in Asia, DAESH - Khorasan Wilayat (ISKP) a powerful organization that poses a serious threat in Afghanistan and the Middle East. The organization has qualities that can cause global security concerns. Its transnational activities and multilingual propaganda increase the scale of the threat. For this reason, the international community should neutralize all areas of activity, propaganda and media networks of the ISKP and prevent the activities of this radical organization that will pose a global threat. This requires intelligence sharing, targeted counter-radicalization measures and a multi-layered counterterrorism approach.

29. Hybrid threats, with their multifaceted nature and intertwined threat domains, pose the primary threat to Asia in today's complex and multidimensional environment. The fragile nature of failed states, such as weak institutions, economic distress, and political instability, them more vulnerable to these threats. The problems that states affected by these threats will begin to experience at home will indirectly lead to regional instability and global security problems. In order to eliminate or mitigate these and similar threats, cooperation between regional and global powers should be increased and new strategies should be developed.

30. In the context of Asia, the developments in northern Syria have a complex and multidimensional nature. At the same time, the developments in Syria a regional and international character beyond the country's domestic issue. In the case of Türkiye, these turmoil in the region unresilient migration means the intensification of international smuggling, terrorist activities and terrorist organization structures.

31. One of the biggest threats to Türkiye in the region is the PYD/YPG organization. This organization is trying to open a space for itself with the demographic change brought about by the Syrian civil war and the irregular and weak state structure. The territorial and political demands of this organization, its foreign extensions, its violence-based organization and terrorist activities constitute a primary threat to Türkiye. The statehood efforts and demands of the PYD/YPG organization a new momentum with the announcement of a local election that has no legal basis for the de facto situation it aims for. This local election initiative can be described as the most serious step taken to legitimize the organization's efforts for autonomous administration.

32. For these and many other reasons, Syria is a region of critical importance for Türkiye, which is home to a number of first-degree threat elements. For this reason, Syria's territorial integrity is very important for Türkiye in terms of its security.

33. Being Asian, Türkiye has historical and cultural ties with many countries of the continent, from Central Asia to East Asia, South Asia to Southeast Asia. The Asia Anew initiative offers an opportunity to further strengthen these ties and ensure its interests and security in these regions through various partnerships.

**November 22, 2024, Istanbul**